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In about 2-Page review Chapter 15, "An Overview of the Idea of Pressure Group," in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria's Politics, pages 194-200

Understanding Pressure Group

To mount pressure is to persuade or coerce someone into doing something. This therefore makes a pressure group a formal and organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. The pressure group can also be called 'The Functional Representative'. Through various occupations and professions, the pressure group represents different sectors of the society. Examples include: Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) representing Lawyers and Solicitors, Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) representing doctors, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) representing interests of academics and learning condition n Nigerian Universities, Nigeria Labour Congress, Christian Association of Nigeria, Oodua People's Congress representing Yoruba people etc.

According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is defined as 'interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups'. Pressure groups came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups. Pressure group's existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate Pressure groups influence public policy, administration and even go a long way to determine political structures of the society and forms of government. These groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic, social and others.

Pressure groups and political parties' activities may sometimes appear similar but they are different from each other. However, these differences do not point to the fact that pressure groups and political parties relate together to achieve certain social changes. Pressure groups existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of the majority of people in the society. Also, to treat the gaps in the democratic process, to encourage participants, and enhance good accountability in our daily society. However while pressure groups are acknowledged as potentially beneficial to a democratic society, problems can arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a few specific people. While pressure groups have their important place in the scheme of things in a nation, there is some downside. Sometimes, due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions, while not considering government's limited resources.

1. Interest groups: These groups are seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society.
2. Cause groups: These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes.
3. Insider groups and Outsider groups: Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government while the outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries.
4. Anomic groups: Groups here have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society.
5. Association groups and Non-Associational groups: Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country while non-associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organization.

Functions of pressure groups include:

1. They link government to the people.
2. They promote participation in government.
3. Pressure groups influence government policies.
4. They serve as a source of information to the government.
5. They stand as instruments of political socialization.
6. They promote the interests of the minority. Etc.

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals including lobbying elected officials, striking, media advocacy and direct political action e.g. organized protests. Pressure groups lobby in so many ways. They lobby with government officials directly. For example they lobby legislators, ministers and other government machineries. They might sometimes lobby these government officials through friends, spouses, children and other relatives. Also, pressure groups may sponsor bills in legislative houses and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills.